Political Science 395 (Winter 2019)
The Politics of Corruption

Northwestern University
Department of Political Science
Tues. 12:00-2:50PM, 303 Lory Hall

Instructor: Jordan Gans-Morse
Office Hours: Thur. 11:00AM-1:00PM or by appointment
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COURSE SUMMARY

What is corruption? How does it affect politics, economics, and the overall quality of life around the world? This course explores these and related questions. The first part of the course investigates various types of corruption – such as bribery, vote buying, and financial kickbacks – with a focus on recent examples from numerous countries. The second part of the course considers the consequences of corruption, with a particular emphasis on its impact on democracy and economic development. The final part of the course focuses on corruption’s roots and examines a variety of anti-corruption policies.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation

Students are expected to complete all readings prior to each session and to attend every seminar. Seminar participation will count for 35% of each student’s overall grade. In addition to unstructured contributions to the conversation, participation will consist of three other responsibilities. First, every week each student will be assigned a reading to analyze with particular care. If disagreements or confusion about the reading arise during discussions, it will be this student’s responsibility to provide clarifying insights. Second, each week by 5:00PM on Monday (the day before seminar meetings), students must post to Canvas at least one discussion question pertaining to the readings. Third, students will be expected to give a brief in-class presentation on their research projects at some point during the quarter.

Assignment

The primary assignment for this course is a research paper of approximately 15 to 20 pages. The writing assignment will count for 65% of the overall grade. Students may pick a research topic of their choice, as long as the topic is related to the theme of corruption.

This is not a project that can be completed at the last minute. To prevent procrastination, there will be deadlines to meet throughout the term:
Thursday, January 30: By or on this date, students should discuss possible research topics with the professor during office hours.

Thursday, February 6: A two-paragraph research topic proposal and preliminary bibliography of at least five sources due.

Thursday, February 13: Annotated bibliography of at least ten sources due.

Thursday, February 27: Preliminary outline of paper due. By or on this date, students should discuss progress with the professor during office hours.

Friday, March 6: Partial rough draft (at least 7 double-spaced pages) due.

Friday, March 13: Final draft of paper due by noon.

Late assignments will be penalized a half-grade (e.g., an A becomes an A-) per day, with the exception of documented cases of illness or family crisis. In such cases, a request must be made to the professor prior to the assignment's due date. Papers previously or simultaneously submitted for another course will not be accepted.

Possible types of research papers include, but are not limited to, the following:

**Literature Review:** Choose one of the topics from the weekly seminars and write a critical literature review on the topic. A critical literature review, drawing on multiple sources, highlights key debates in a research agenda, the positions of prominent scholars in these debates, the extent to which debates have or have not been settled, and areas for future research. Although a literature review involves a summary of existing works, it is essential to recognize that a good review also includes original critical analysis. Such analysis may critique specific studies, present an original way of classifying or organizing an ongoing debate, or offer insights on important avenues of future research.

**Article or Book Critique:** Identify a specific study with which you strongly disagree or find in some way lacking, and conduct research to support your critique. This research may draw on other scholars who agree with your position vis-à-vis the scholarship you are critiquing, or it may utilize historical work, case studies, or quantitative data that support your claims.

**Country Study:** Choose a country (or a state or sub-region of a country) and develop a report about the levels and types of corruption in your chosen case study. Examine sources of corruption, analyze the effects of corruption on economic development and/or democracy, and consider efforts to fight corruption and whether or not they have been successful in your chosen country or region. Based on your findings, analyze the extent to which your case study confirms or disconfirms the conclusions of readings we will be doing for the course.

**Data Analysis:** Choose a claim from the literature we have been reading and examine the empirical support for this claim. Offer a critique of the sources of data and methodological approaches used in various studies. Address how types of data and methodological approaches affect each study's findings and offer conclusions about which studies are most methodologically convincing.
IN-CLASS ELECTRONICS POLICY

Please turn all phones off before the seminar. Note that this implies no texting as well as no calls. It is permissible to bring your laptop to the seminar discussions, but it goes without saying that laptops should be used for note taking only.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Instructors are required by university policy to report violations of academic integrity standards to the Dean’s Office. A non-exhaustive list of behaviors that violate standards of academic integrity includes: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, aiding and abetting dishonesty, falsification of records and official documents, and unauthorized access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems. Note that even unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether to cite or how to cite a source, then confer with the professor.

Information about Northwestern’s academic integrity policies can be found at: http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/.

You are strongly encouraged to take issues of academic integrity seriously. Nearly 20 Northwestern students were suspended last year due to violations of academic integrity standards. Such violations can end up on your academic record and may become a red flag for employers and graduate schools.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All necessary accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please contact the professor at the beginning of the term so that we can work together with AccessibleNU to make arrangements.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, the aim is that students will:

• Apply critical thinking and analysis to the study of contemporary political and economic events;
• Apply analytical writing skills;
• Use theories of comparative politics and political economy to place real-world manifestations of corruption in scholarly perspective.
**COURSE MATERIALS**

There is one required book for the course:


Other materials will be provided via Canvas. For those of you with a strong interest in corruption and related topics, you may wish to purchase your own copy of some of the following works. We will be reading excerpts from some of these:

COURSE OVERVIEW

PART I: DEFINING CORRUPTION

Week 1: Definitions and Types of Corruption
Tuesday, January 7

Required Readings

• Pages 59-72 in Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (Yale University Press, 1968)

Supplementary Readings

• Pages 211-221 in Daniel Treisman, “What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?” Annual Review of Political Science 10 (2007)
• Chapters 1, 3 and 4 in Dan Hough, Analysing Corruption (Agenda Publishing, 2017)
• Chapters 1 and 2 in Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, The Quest for Good Governance: How Societies Develop Control of Corruption (Cambridge University Press, 2015)
PART II: CORRUPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Week 2: Bribery and Administrative Corruption
Tuesday, January 14

Required Readings

• Pages 91-104 in Susan Rose-Ackerman, Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform (Cambridge University Press, 1999)
• Intro, pages 11-13 & 27-38, and Ch. 2 in Alena Ledeneva, Russia’s Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking & Informal Exchange (Cambridge University Press, 1998)
• Randall Eliason, “The Republicans’ Expert is Wrong About Bribery,” The Washington Post (December 5, 2019)
• Familiarize yourself U.S. bribery law at: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/201

Supplementary Readings

• Matthew Stephenson, “The FCPA’s ‘Facilitating Payments’ Exception: Mostly Harmless,” The Global Anticorruption Blog (June 17, 2014)
• Kelly McMann, Corruption As a Last Resort: Adapting to the Market in Central Asia (Cornell University Press, 2014)
• Abel Polese, “If I receive it, it is a gift; if I demand it, then it is a bribe’: On the Local Meaning of Economic Transactions in Ukraine,” Anthropology in Action 15, 3 (2008)
Week 3: Economic Costs of Corruption  
Tuesday, January 21

Required Readings

- Chapter 2 in Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences and Reform* (Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- Chapter 1 in David Kang, *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Supplementary Readings

- Pages 223-228 in Daniel Treisman, “What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10 (2007)
Week 4: Corruption in Developed Countries
Tuesday, January 28

Required Readings

  o Pages 3-9 and 12-21 in Edward Glaeser and Claudia Goldin, “Corruption and Reform: Introduction”
• Michael Atkinson, “Discrepancies in Perceptions of Corruption, or Why Is Canada So Corrupt?” Political Science Quarterly 126, 3 (2011)
• Viet Thanh Nguyen, “College admissions are corrupt because universities are. Here’s how to fix them,” The Washington Post (March 19, 2019)
• “Turns Out There’s a Proper Way to Buy Your Kid a College Slot,” The New York Times (March 12, 2019)

Supplementary Reading

• Thomas Gradel and Dick Simpson, Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism, and Criminality (University of Illinois Press, 2015)
• Chapter 3 in James Scott, Comparative Political Corruption (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972)
PART III: CORRUPTION AND DEMOCRACY

Week 5: Electoral Corruption
Tuesday, February 4

Required Readings

  - Frederic Schaffer and Andreas Schedler, “What is Vote Buying?”

Supplementary Readings

- Simona Piattoni, “Clientelism in Historical and Comparative Perspective,” in Simona Piattoni, ed., *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2001)
Week 6: Lobbying and Corruption
Tuesday, February 11

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings

- Zephyr Teachout, Corruption in America: From Benjamin Franklin’s Snuff Box to Citizens United (Harvard University Press, 2014)
Week 7: Regime Type and Corruption
Tuesday, February 18

Required Readings


Supplementary Readings

PART IV: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

Week 8: Understanding Corruption’s Persistence
Tuesday, February 25

Required Readings

• Chapter 6 in Ray Fisman and Miriam Golden, Corruption: What Everyone Needs to Know (Oxford University Press, 2017)

Supplementary Readings

Week 9: Overcoming Corruption  
Tuesday, March 3

Required Readings

- Pages 69-97 and Chapter 4 in Robert Klitgaard, Controlling Corruption (University of California Press, 1988)
- Sarah Chayes, “Kleptocracy in America: Corruption is Reshaping Governments Everywhere,” Foreign Affairs (September/October 2017)

Supplementary Readings

General Literature on Reforms


Transparency and Corruption


**Fighting Electoral Corruption**

• Simeon Nichter, “Vote Buying in Brazil: From Impunity to Prosecution,” *Latin American Research Review* (forthcoming)
• Pages 1-12 and 245-255 in Fabrice Lehoucq and Ivan Molina, *Stuffing the Ballot Box: Fraud, Election Reform, and Democratization in Costa Rica* (Cambridge University Press, 2002)
• Chapter 8 in Susan Stokes, Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco, *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

**Case Studies**